



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

March 29, 2005

# News Release

## **ICE DEPORTS TERRORIST WHO HIJACKED, BLEW UP AIRLINER**

*Lebanese man convicted for leading '85 takeover of Jordanian plane in Beirut*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A Lebanese terrorist convicted in the United States after leading the 1985 hijacking of a Jordanian airliner and later blowing it up as it sat on the tarmac was deported Monday to Lebanon by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Fawaz Yunis was convicted in March 1989 in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia of conspiracy, aircraft piracy and hostage-taking in hijacking of Royal Jordanian Airlines Flight 402 in Beirut four years earlier.

Yunis was taken into ICE custody Feb. 18 by officers of ICE's Office of Detention and Removal Operations as he was released from federal prison in Petersburg, Va.

On June 11, 1985, Yunis and four other heavily armed terrorists seized the airliner in Beirut and threatened to kill their hostages – including two United States citizens-- unless their political demands were met.

After two unsuccessful attempts to fly to Tunis, the hijackers returned the plane to Beirut, where they released the hostages, blew up the plane and then fled from the airport. Yunis was subsequently brought to justice by U.S. law enforcement in 1987.

Yunis, who is affiliated with the Amal Militia in Lebanon, was convicted two years later under new legal authorities that strengthened the U.S. government's ability to prosecute international terrorists who commit acts of terrorism against U.S. citizens anywhere in the world. Yunis was the first international terrorist to be apprehended overseas and brought back to the United States to stand trial.

"This deportation culminates the United States' successful effort to bring this terrorist leader to justice and to ensure he paid for his crimes," said Director Victor X. Cerda, who leads ICE's national

alien apprehension, detention and removal program. "Not only is he a terrorist, but he's a convicted felon. The law simply does not allow aliens of such notoriety to remain in the United States."

Yunis's apprehension and removal by ICE takes place under the agency's Criminal Alien Program (CAP), which identifies criminal aliens eligible for deportation who are serving sentences in correctional institutions. Upon the completion of their sentences, aliens identified under the CAP are taken into ICE custody and held for removal from the United States before they can be released into the community.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*